

► Emotional Health Issues

All people are vulnerable to the overwhelming nature of tragic events. We all are affected in some way.

Recognize early signs of distress and make plans to:

- monitor optimal stress levels
- keep a realistic perspective
- don't blame yourself unjustly
- try to sort events into categories of importance
- talk things out with someone else
- get enough sleep and rest
- eat healthy – avoid stimulants and alcohol
- get involved in positive activities with other people
- try to accept what cannot be changed
- engage in some physical activity

And, above all, **REMEMBER**, you are normal and your reactions are like those of anyone experiencing an abnormal event.



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Help for Your School Community

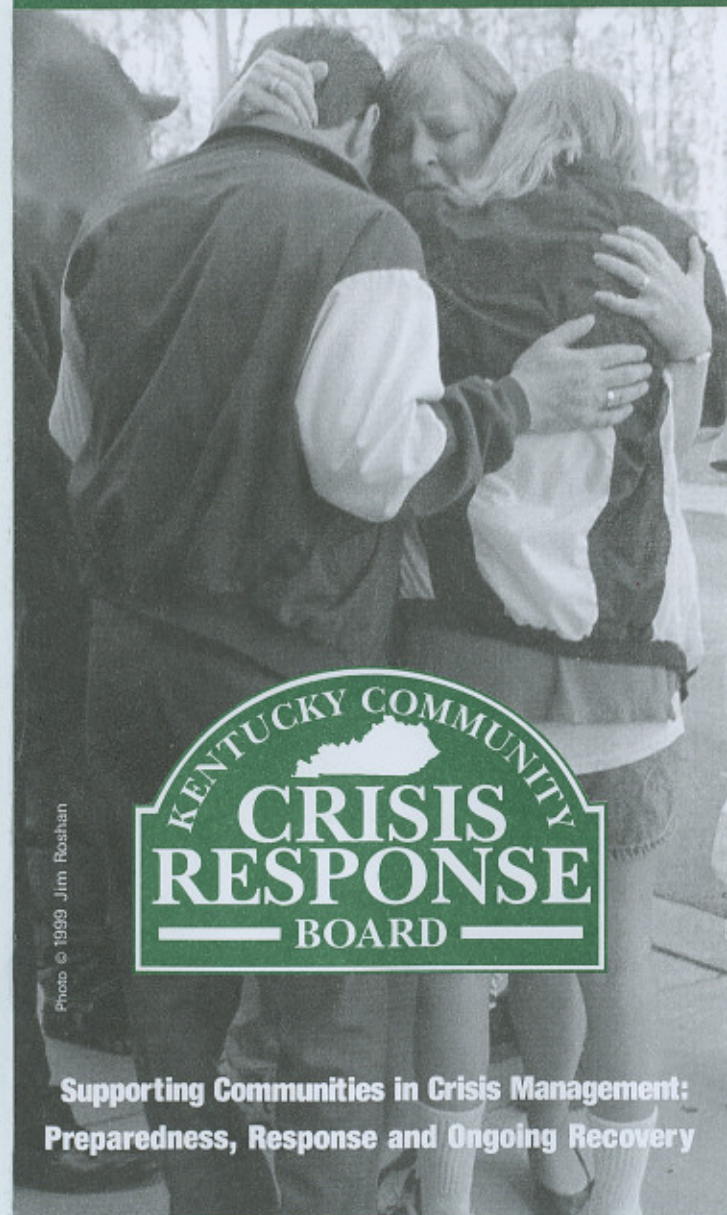


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**Supporting Communities in Crisis Management:
Preparedness, Response and Ongoing Recovery**



► In the Aftermath...

Trauma knows no bounds. School communities are confronted with putting the pieces back together following sudden tragic events such as:

- death or serious injury to students and staff
- bus accidents, fires, explosions, etc.
- natural disasters, i.e., tornados, floods or earthquakes
- violence

► What to Expect...

Children and their parents, faculty, staff and administrators are all impacted by the event and benefit from immediate and long-range emotional support.

Factors influencing reactions are:

- age and personality type
- degree of family and social support
- previous experience with trauma

Children may experience:

- changes in their thinking, behavior and feelings
- having trouble expressing what they need and want

► Help for Your School Community...

Schools can help children resolve crisis by:

- restoring a learning environment
- modeling how to recover from the event
- maintaining basic educational goals

Administrative staff and teachers can help heal their school community by:

- reducing conflict between groups
- encouraging groups inside and outside of the school to work together
- following familiar school routines
- acknowledging the trauma through shared activities and observances
- representing safety and security
- working with children and their parents when possible
- creating an opportunity for trained responders to be highly visible in the school following a crisis
- remembering that children are resilient when supported adequately



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► Normal Reactions

These common reactions have been identified by students and adults recovering from the impact of sudden tragedy.

PHYSICAL

- exhaustion or physical complaints
- worry about safety issues
- changes in eating or other habits
- trouble discussing what happened

THINKING

- trouble concentrating or making decisions
- trouble discussing what happened
- confusion, disbelief or flashbacks

EMOTIONAL

- generalized anxiety or guilt
- crying or fearfulness
- not feeling anything
- intensified or unfamiliar feelings

BEHAVIORAL

- fear of being alone or in the dark
- fear of going to school or work
- social withdrawal at school or home
- arguing or disobeying rules

SPIRITUAL

- individual or group reactions will vary
- tragic events many times confirm or challenge one's personal belief system

